

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 02356 171516Z  
ACTION NEA-07

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EUR-08 NSCE-00 NSC-05 PM-03  
DODE-00 INR-05 CIAE-00 SSM-03 PRS-01 USIA-01 SP-02  
L-01 /051 W

-----180158Z 040964 /62

R 171448Z MAY 77  
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4055  
INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY JIDDA  
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 2356

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR SY SA US  
SUBJ: WHY THE SAUDIS ARE WITHHOLDING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO  
SYRIA: A DANISH VIEW

REF: DAMASCUS 2889

1. DANISH AMBASSADOR RUDOLPH THORNING-PETERSEN CALLED ON  
CHARGE MAY 13. HE HAD JUST RETURNED FROM DAMASCUS, WHERE  
HE IS ALSO ACCREDITED AND WHERE HE HAD BEEN PREPARING FOR A  
VISIT BY HIS FOREIGN MINISTER NEXT MONTH. DURING DISCUSSION  
OF THE SYRIAN FINANCIAL SITUATION, PETERSEN ALSO REMARKED THE  
SAUDIS WERE TIGHTENING THE PURSE STRINGS AND CITED THE FOLLOW-  
ING POSSIBLE REASONS:

A. THE SAUDIS MAY HAVE BEEN UNDER THE ILLUSION THAT ONCE  
THE SYRIAN FORCES ARRIVED IN LEBANON THEY COULD ESTABLISH  
MILITARY CONTROL AND POLITICAL STABILITY VERY QUICKLY. NOW  
THAT THE PROBLEM HAS PROVED MUCH MORE DIFFICULT THAN  
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THEY EXPECTED, THEY BLAME THE SYRIANS FOR HAVING MISLED THEM.

B. THE EFFECT OF THE SYRIAN MILITARY INTERVENTION  
IN LEBANON LAST YEAR, WHICH THE SAUDIS  
HAVE HELPED TO FINANCE, WAS TO SAVE THE CHRISTIAN FORCES  
FROM DEFEAT. THIS MAY HAVE MADE SENSE FROM A POLITICAL  
POINT OF VIEW, BUT WAS BASICALLY AT VARIANCE WITH THE

DEEP MUSLIM EXTREMIST STREAK IN THE SAUDI CHARACTER.  
THE SAUDIS DO NOT NORMALLY USE THEIR MONEY TO HELP  
CHRISTIANS.

C. THE SAUDIS MAY BE ANNOYED BY AND SUSPICIOUS  
OF SYRIA'S CONTINUING CLOSE TIES WITH THE SOVIET UNION,  
AND PARTICULARLY ASAD'S RECENT TRIP TO MOSCOW.

D. THE SYRIANS, AMBASSADOR PETERSEN SAID, HAVE NOT  
GIVEN UP THEIR DREAMS OF A FERTILE CRESCENT STATE  
OF CONFEDERATION THAT THEY CAN DOMINATE. ALTHOUGH  
SYRIA MAY NOT NOW BE PLANNING TO ASSERT PERMANENT  
MILITARY CONTROL OVER JORDAN AND LEBANON, THEY ARE  
OBVIOUSLY INTERESTED IN EXERCISING AS MUCH POLITICAL  
LEVERAGE IN THESE TWO COUNTRIES AS POSSIBLE. THE  
SAUDIS KNOW THIS AND ALSO KNOW THAT TO THE EXTENT SYRIAN  
INFLUENCE IN THESE TWO COUNTRIES AND WITH THE  
PALESTINIANS INCREASES, SAUDI INFLUENCE IS REDUCED.  
THEY ARE THEREFORE RELUCTANT TO BUILD UP SYRIA'S  
ECONOMIC POWER.

2. COMMENT: SINCE AMBASSADOR PETERSEN IS A WELL-  
INFORMED AND INTELLIGENT MAN, WITH LONG EXPERIENCE IN THE  
MIDDLE EAST, HIS OBSERVATIONS MAY HELP IN ANSWERING THE  
QUESTION POSED IN THE LAST SENTENCE OF REFTEL.  
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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** Z  
**Capture Date:** 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PERSONAL OPINION, ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, FOREIGN ASSISTANCE  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
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**Decaption Date:** 22 May 2009  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
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**Expiration:**  
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**Original Handling Restrictions:** LIMDIS  
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**Previous Handling Restrictions:** LIMDIS  
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**Review Release Event:** n/a  
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**Subject:** WHY THE SAUDIS ARE WITHHOLDING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO SYRIA: A DANISH VIEW  
**TAGS:** PFOR, SY, SA, US, DA, (THORNING-PETERSEN, RUDOLPH)  
**To:** STATE  
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